

MAY 31 2006

Agilent Ref: 10030468-1
United States Application Serial No. 10/686,092

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions.

In the present case, the claims of Groups II-V include elements found in the claims of Group I. As such, the search for the claims of elected Group I should find any relevant prior art relating to the claims of Groups II-V.

Accordingly, little, if any, additional searching should be required for the claims of Groups II-V, and therefore the examination of the claims of Groups II-V together with the claims of elected Group I should impose little, if any, additional burden on the Examiner.

As such, examining the claims of Groups II-V and the claims of elected Group I together in the present application clearly does not impose an undue or serious burden on the Examiner. In the absence of such an undue or serious burden, the Examiner is clearly instructed by the MPEP to examine the entire application. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to rejoin the claims of Groups II -V with the claims of elected Group I and to examine all the claims together in the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment of fees associated with this communication, including any necessary fees for extensions of time, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1078.

Respectfully submitted,

BOZICEVIC, FIELD & FRANCIS LLP

Date: 3-31-06

By:

Bret E. Field
Registration No. 37,620

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